1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
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SOCIAL CUSTOMS.

000 The Gros Ventre system of terms of relationship has been given in a 605 former publication.[1]

601 Cousins, so far as the relationship was known, were called brothers and sisters, and they called each other's children son or daughter if the cousin [582] was of the same sex as the speaker, or nephew or niece if the cousin was of the opposite sex. Any known relationship was a bar to marriage. The [587] brother of a dead man sometimes married his widow, but this was not always the case.

583 Large amounts of property, especially horses, were given away for wives for the honor of the act, but there was no rule or definite custom covering the quantity of property so given. The horses might be given not only to the father, but to the brothers, uncles, and other relatives of the girl. Sometimes, without having received any gifts and apparently without any previous understanding, a man would give his daughter to a young man, who thereupon would give him horses, or distribute them among his wife's other relatives. Old men practised this custom in order to obtain the aid and services of a young man in caring for their horses and in other ways, and no doubt 585 sometimes also to insure a more certain food-supply. A young man on 431 marrying received a tent with all the proper furniture, usually from his prospective parents-in-law, but sometimes from his own parents, if they were the wealthier.

606 Although a young married man often lived with his father-in-law, the [591] well-known taboo custom between mother-in-law and son-in-law — which forbade their speaking, looking at each other, or being in the same tent — existed among the Gros Ventre. There was, however, no father-in-law taboo. The mother-in-law taboo extended to the son-in-law's brother.

584 If a woman did not wish a man for her lover, she might send him to do a 721 certain act of bravery. If he returned successfully from war, having accomplished the deed, he was then accepted. This custom is said to have led to the death of many young men.

428 At a person's death his property was inherited generally by his relatives. His father and mother, brothers, sisters, and children would receive part. His father and mother received the most. A man often disposed of his property before his death. If he died suddenly, as on being killed in war, his parents divided his property. It was not customary for a man on going to war to divide his property among his relatives in the contingency of his [764] death. Property particularly valued by the dead person was buried with him.

[1] Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History, Vol. XVIII, Part I, pp. 9, 150.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
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trained to do a woman's work. Then when she was ten or eleven she was handed over to some man. They thought that if they gave her to her husband when she was so young she would get attached to him and make him a good wife. The Gros Ventres didn't want a woman to get in the habit of running around with different men, so a woman's folks worried if she was unmarried too long [after being divorced or widowed] because she might do something bad."

There is some evidence that as a woman became older, if she had occasion to remarry, she was somewhat more free to express her choice, although presumably a male relative would still be in the position of making the actual decision. It was said that younger men, especially those seeking to marry "older" women, "were afraid of their tongues" and felt more confident of success in possession of "love medicine." Al Chandler, for instance, was offered a love charm which he refused, but the speech of his uncle on that occasion throws some light on a situation of this kind. His uncle had told him: "Now you are a young man and you will be thinking about women. Maybe you want to get married and have picked out a woman and she doesn't want you. Maybe you are not good enough for her and, when you ask her, she will run you down plenty. Some women are swell-heads and can make a man feel cheap. It hurts a fellow to hear things like that—but that is what this charm is for. You take this and keep it in your pocket safely and do not show it to anyone or let anyone know you have it. Now if this woman hurts your feelings, go at night to where she lives and watch carefully, being sure you have the right one. Then when she goes out of the lodge to relieve herself, watch her so you can locate the exact spot. Then open this little packet and dip in it the tip of a little sliver of wood. Go over to the spot and stick the sliver right in the ground on the spot where she urinated and walk away. That is all you have to do, and in a very short time this woman will come running after you. You tell her: 'What are you doing that for? I don't want you.' She will get so anxious that she will beg you to have her."

Regardless of whether the man were the suitor, or whether the woman's relatives offered her in marriage, the marriage was validated through presents given by the groom. Traditionally at

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least one horse was included, but no given amount of property was specified nor did bargaining enter into the negotiations.[6] Following the pattern of ostentatious liberality, a man could reflect honor upon himself by giving generously, and one with such a reputation was preferred over a poor or stingy one. Whatever the groom offered was divided among the bride's relatives. As one woman said: "A husband always gave something for his wife, no matter how many wives he acquired, because this is what makes it 'legal.' Then the girl's father and brother divided the presents. If the brother arranged the marriage, he would say to the father 'Here is a horse for you.' And if the father or uncle had been approached by the husband, then they did the same way. Sometimes even the father's sister was given a horse or something else when her niece married."

Although it was not obligatory, a bride's family often provided her with goods to take to her marriage, especially if it were her first one. Singer explained in regard to Coming Daylight: "Her family was well-to-do and showed how much they thought of themselves by giving her a good send-off. You should have seen her going off to her first husband. She was only about ten years old and she looked so tiny leading that big horse. On the horse was a fine fringed saddle and the travois was just piled up with painted parfleshes and other things."

The following account of the marriage of Coming Daylight's daughter shows how the pattern was carried out under changed conditions: "One night when the family returned from a dance they found a letter addressed to the oldest son, Ed, from a man whom he liked, asking for Ed's sister, Gertrude. When his father came in from tending the horses they told him about the proposal and he agreed right away, saying: 'We are still keeping her and she is a big girl. I'm glad this offer has been made.' So a week later they loaded a new buggy with Gertrude's things,—bedding, beds, trunk, sewing machine, etc.,—and her father drove this to the creek where the dance hall was located. Meanwhile Coming Daylight took her daughter to the house of the man who had asked for her and left her there sitting on this man's bed. The groom did not appear at the Grass Dance that evening, even though he

[6] Cf. Kroeber, 1908, p. 180.

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was Keeper of the Crow Belt, as he had taken Gertrude and camped at the Mission. The next morning the couple was married by the priest and Gertrude's father brought the buggy full of goods and gave them all that, including the team of horses. Everybody could see that this couple started off with a lot."

Instead of making arrangements, a man might simply send his daughter to become the wife of another man without forewarning him. The recipient of such a bride could not well refuse her and was supposed to act as though he were happy to have her, regardless of how many other wives he might have or his real feelings in the matter. He, too, would normally give some kind of present to her father, the amount depending somewhat on the previous reputation of the bride. On the one side, she might have been given merely to get her off her father's hands, on the other, she might have been highly desirable as a wife and her father would have taken this means to show generosity on his own part and to honor the husband he had selected.

Sometimes elopements occurred, but this was very rarely if ever the case, so far as the girl was concerned, until she had been given at least once in marriage arranged by her relatives. Should a married woman run off with another man, it was up to her husband to deal with the situation. If, however, she had been widowed or divorced, and eloped before another marriage had been arranged, her relatives would be angry, but the affair could be patched up if the usual presents to them were forthcoming from the man.

There was no hard and fast rule in regard to residence. Matrilocal residence in the same lodge was incompatible with the observance of the mother-in-law taboo and it was said that if a man wished his son-in-law to remain with him, he provided the separate lodge and all the equipment.[7] The tendency seems to have been toward patrilocal residence in general, although it was not unusual for a couple to move back and forth. Coming Daylight lived most of her married life with her husband's people. As a child-bride she first lived in the lodge with her husband's parents; later on she and her husband went to her people, living with her

[7] Obligations between kin are discussed pp. 109–10. Kroeber, 1908, p. 180, states that a young married man often lived with his father-in-law.

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me and he didn't send for me to come back. Not long after that though, my sister died, and her husband's other two wives came after me. I was playing out on the ice when they came and told me they were going to take me back with them. Ignorant as I was, I said I would go, and that I would have to tell my father first. But my father said: 'No. You shouldn't go with them. Those two women are not related to you and they might be mean to you. If your sister were still living, I would see to it that you went back to that man.' So those women said nothing more and I never heard from them or their husband again."

It was also thought that if the older wife were the sister of a child-bride she might be more willing to "protect" her. The husband of so young a wife was supposed to "wait a while" before claiming the marital right, and some men actually did so. Dressed-in-White for instance deferred the consummation of his marriage for over two years after Coming Daylight had been given to him at about the age of ten. Other men were not so considerate, however, and if an older wife tried to delay the procedure it was interpreted as being done not out of jealousy but through fear of consequences to so young a child. The husband alone determined the use of the marital right and such interference as another wife could offer would be only indirect. This is shown in the following account which concerns a woman well-known to both Singer and Coming Daylight. "One night soon after her little sister had been sent to their husband, this woman overheard him say to the girl: 'Make your bed wider, I am going to sleep with you.' Her own bedding was on the opposite side of the fire from that of her sister and she decided to try to discourage her husband from this undertaking. As she had expected, the husband that night covered up the fire so the lodge would be dark. On the sly, however, she was able to poke the fire so it flared out brightly. He got up and dimmed it once more, but again she made it flare. This was repeated several times and once she heard him say angrily; 'Oh, this is such good wood, it burns too well—I wish I could kill it!" Finally to her dismay she heard him whisper to the girl: 'I will take you outside because I can't seem to make it dark in here. You must not scream or cry out though because